



TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 2nd March 2026

[Minister Butler](#) | [Minister McAllister](#) | [Minister Rae](#) | [Assistant Minister McBride](#) |
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[The Adelaide Advertiser](#)** (page 11) reports the immunotherapy drugs Opdivo and Yervoy have been listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to provide affordable treatment for more than 5000 Australians with rare and advanced cancers. Minister Mark Butler stated that this world-first listing will remove the previous restriction on multiple prescriptions and reduce the cost of these medications for concession card holders.
- **[The Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 5) reports the Federal Government is investigating the reinstatement of organ donor registration through driver's licence applications to address a national registration rate that has declined to 35 per cent. The Federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Rebecca White, stated that she has sought advice on the steps required to relink these systems and is working with the states and territories to ensure the Australia Organ and Tissue Authority national registry is as accessible as possible.
- **[The Hobart Mercury](#)** (page 1) reports the Federal Government is monitoring potential rolling stoppages across public hospitals as approximately 4500 health workers seek pay increases and improved conditions.
- **[The Northern Territory News](#)** (page 3) reports the 3.35 million dollars in emergency repairs at Royal Darwin Hospital following structural damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Fina have commenced, with a formal audit of completed works expected in March.

- [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) (page 3) reports NSW is conducting a snap review of hospitals following reports of pest infestations, maintenance failures, and mould that contributed to the deaths of two transplant patients.

MINISTER BUTLER

Cancer patients in huge PBS win

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/03/2026, Jessica Wang, Page 11

More than 5000 Australians struggling with rare and advanced cancers will be able to access two new immunotherapy drugs for just \$25, in a move that has been described as "transformative" for patients. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said more than 5000 Australians would be able to benefit from the cheaper medicines.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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Organ donation drive

Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2026, Hayden Johnson, Page 13

The federal government will investigate how to strengthen Australia's languishing organ donation rates amid overwhelming support to reinstate the choice on driver's licences. [...] Federal Health Minister Mark Butler's office did not respond to questions about whether the commonwealth would push states into reinstating organ donation into the driver's licence process, but noted Mr Butler previously said the removal was a "terrible backward step".

Also reported by: [Courier Mail \(Brisbane\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#).

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Glaring gap in cig laws

Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2026, Jon Kaila, Page 10

Victoria is the only major state in Australia without closure powers for shops caught selling illicit tobacco. [...] Health Minister Mark Butler said illicit tobacco was the "biggest challenge we have".

Also reported by: [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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Labor's excise in stupidity

Herald Sun, General News, 02/03/2026, Theo Foukkare, Page 10

If you wanted to design a policy that guarantees bigger profits for organised crime, you'd start by further blowing out the price gap between legal and illegal cigarettes. Tomorrow, that's exactly what Canberra is doing. [...] We're told by Health Minister Mark Butler that smoking rates are falling, so everything is fine.

Also reported by: [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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New operator for Darwin Medicare Urgent Care Clinic announced

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 01/03/2026, Lottie Hood

The operator for the Top End's newest Medicare Urgent Care Clinic has been selected and expected to open in the next few months. [...] Minister for Health and Ageing and MP, Mark Butler, said the newest clinic will join an existing network of eight Urgent Care Clinics across the Northern Territory "The Albanese Government is getting on with the job of delivering more Medicare Urgent Care Clinics for people in the Northern Territory," Mr Butler.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Herald Sun \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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World-first PBS win: Health Minister backs tumour-agnostic funding of BMS cancer drugs

Health Industry Hub, Other, 01/03/2026

Marking a world-first shift in cancer care, Federal Health Minister Mark Butler has confirmed a tumour-agnostic listing of Opdivo (nivolumab) [...]

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More 'free' GPs

The Sentinel News, Other, 01/03/2026

Residents in Blair have gained greater access to free GP appointments, with new figures showing the number of bulk billing practices in the electorate has risen from 13 to 23. [...] Federal Minister for Health and Ageing Mark Butler said more Australians are finding it easier to find a bulk billing doctor right across the country, including in Blair.

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Channel 7, Seven News at 5pm (Sunday), 01/03/2026, Michael Usher

The Federal Government has made two aggressive cancer treatments cheaper, adding Opdivo and Yervoy to the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme. The medication helps strengthen the immune system to destroy cancer cells. Health Minister Mark Butler says, "it is going to make a huge difference in giving hope and extended lives to literally thousands of Australians who are battling advanced cancer."

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER WHITE

Mood for change on organ donation

Daily Telegraph, Edition Changes, 02/03/2026, Hayden Johnson, Page 13

The federal government will investigate how to strengthen Australia's languishing organ donation rates amid overwhelming support to reinstate the choice on driver's licences. [...] Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Rebecca White said the federal government would investigate how to reinstate the scheme.

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Call for a change of heart on licence rules

The Tasmanian government will consider reintroducing organ donation as an option on driver's licences in a bid to boost enrolments. [...] Despite this, federal assistant health minister Rebecca White said there was always more work to do to boost enrolments, with relinking organ donor registration to driver's licences a consideration.

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Seven Tasmania, Nightly News (Sunday), 01/03/2026, Louise Houbaer

Since the National DonateLife program was introduced, more than 20,000 Australians have received a transplant. Assistant Health and Aged Care Minister Rebecca White says the donor consent rates in Tasmania have increased to 76 per cent, while the entire country has recorded about 53 per cent. Tasmanian families are being encouraged to discuss transplant donations.

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2SM, 19:00 News (Weekend), 01/03/2026

More than 20,000 Australians have received a life-saving organ transplant since the establishment of the National DonateLife program. Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Rebecca White, says the latest figures are encouraging, but more people need to sign up.

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ABC Radio Hobart, 12:00 News (Weekend), 01/03/2026

Almost 1,500 Australian lives were saved by organ donors in 2025. There was an 8 per cent increase in transplantation last year, with the highest number of deceased donors on record, but the number of families who agree to donation in hospital remains low at 53 per cent. Assistant Health Minister Rebecca White says it's important to register and discuss your wishes with your family.

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DEPARTMENT

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Caring for carers: How respite services can make all the difference for those looking after others

ABC Online, Other, 01/03/2026, Penny Travers

Each Wednesday, Meika Robertson's husband Rob spends the day in respite care going on outings, doing puzzles, arts activities and playing guitar. [...] Carer advocates have long championed the importance of respite care and support for carers, but services can be hard to find.

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Australia's broken aged care home support system is ensuring that loved ones live and die without dignity

Dying Australians approved for government-funded aged care home support are struggling to access it, with carers describing a system plagued by delays and lack of control around how funding is spent. The accounts of carers and aged care assessors spoken to by Guardian Australia show that , many are left without adequate and timely support even after funding has been approved.

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DISABILITY AND CARERS

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PRIMARY CARE

38 surgeries in three days: Record number of cataract surgeries in East Arnhem

Northern Territory News, Other, 01/03/2026, Lottie Hood

A record-breaking three days of surgeries saw 38 people walking away with their vision restored in Gove last month. An NT Health ophthalmology team pulled out all the stops during a short-term trip to Gove this year and delivered a record number of cataract surgeries.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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2GB, Weekends, 01/03/2026, Jason Morrison

Interview with University of Western Australia Associate Professor and pharmacist Amy Page. Pharmacy leaders are calling for the expansion of the Home Medicines Review (HMR) program to improve patient safety. Page says the program is a free service where credentialed pharmacists visit patients at home to help manage their medications safely and effectively. She notes that the public needs more awareness about the program and that there is a need for more credentialed pharmacists for this program.

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POPULATION HEALTH

Newborn test saves Gabriel

Adelaide Advertiser, General News, 02/03/2026, Brad Crouch, Page 14

A dramatically-expanded newborn screening program has alerted a Woodcroft family that their son Gabriel is at risk of deafness if he takes certain antibiotics. During pregnancy, his mum, Sophie Caras, enrolled in the NewbornsInSA study which is a new model of expanding the number of conditions screened in South Australian newborns from around 30 to more than 600 genetic conditions.

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Phase two works for Royal Hobart Hospital emergency department expansion set to begin

The Courier Mail, Other, 01/03/2026, Rob Inglis

The Royal Hobart Hospital's emergency department was designed for 45,000 patients a year but is now accommodating nearly 80,000, as progress is made on a long-awaited expansion. [...] Tasmania has the worst emergency department wait times in the country, AIHW figures show, with just 46 per

cent of patients seen within a clinically recommended time frame in 2024-25 compared to 67 per cent nationally.

Also reported by: [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Daily Telegraph Australia \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#).

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Water Bankruptcy threatens human and planetary health

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 02/03/2026, Kate Wylie

Water bankruptcy is a serious public health issue that must be urgently addressed. Health practitioners have a responsibility to lead in shaping a future where water is protected and valued.

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CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SCREENING

Blood test on the ball

Daily Telegraph, General News, 02/03/2026, Page 11

A simple blood test may help identify which men are more likely to experience a recurrence of testicular cancer, a new Australian-led study has found. If found early, testicular cancer is one of the most curable cancers and survival rates are high but recurrences can occur.

Also reported by: [Adelaide Advertiser \(Adelaide\)](#).

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'Less funding than erectile dysfunction'

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 02/03/2026, Ashleigh Jansen, Page 3

A mother and daughter duo are attempting to "fill the endo gap" because they say there are more grants available for erectile dysfunction than endometriosis. Gold Coasters Katrina and Natalia Sanguigno launched a campaign alongside Endometriosis Awareness Month in March to help raise money for research.

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Pancreatic cancer in Australia: persistent challenges and priorities

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 02/03/2026, Mark Buzza & Melanie Regan

Pancreatic cancer must be recognised as a national health priority, supported by long-term investment in research, clinical innovation, workforce capability, and equitable access to care. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, deaths from pancreatic cancer have almost doubled in the past 20 years, have grown at 2.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Simple change to organ donations through driver's licences that will save 200 more Aussies every year

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 01/03/2026, Kristy Symonds, Isabella Pesch & Jackie Sinnerton

More than 2000 anxious Australians are languishing on the waitlist for a lifesaving organ transplant, 50 of them will die waiting but shocking new data reveals the number of registered donors is going backwards. DonateLife statistics to be released today show the number of eligible Australians over the age of 16 who are registered as organ and tissue donors has fallen to 35 per cent of the population – down from 36 per cent the year before.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#).

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This lifesaving opportunity is as simple as ticking a box

The Courier Mail, Other, 01/03/2026

There is no greater gift we can offer our fellow humans than life itself. And the opportunity to give such a gift is remarkably straightforward. But, inexplicably, governments across the nation have not implemented a policy that could save thousands of lives as more than 2000 anxious Australians languish on a waiting list for a lifesaving organ transplant.

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WA organ donation: Simple QR code on licence forms proves successful in boosting donor rates

West Australian, Other, 01/03/2026, Claire Sadler

More than 17,000 West Australians signed up to be an organ donor last year after registrations were reinstated onto drivers licence and vehicle renewal forms. Organ donation registrations in 2025 surged by 25 per cent compared to the previous year with 17,564 West Australians signing up compared to 14,045 in 2024.

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PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND HEALTH REFORM

\$3.3m tender among RDH repairs bill

Northern Territory News, General News, 02/03/2026, Lottie Hood, Page 3

Cyclone Fina's visit to Royal Darwin Hospital last year shattered ceilings and confidence in the ageing facility and now it seems the NT government's bank, as the cost of the emergency repairs has been revealed. A leaked photo of bricks showering down into a waiting area on the first floor of the Darwin hospital at the height of Tropical Cyclone Fina caused alarm to spike in November.

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Review into pests at hospitals

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 02/03/2026, Kate Aubusson, Page 3

The Minns government has launched a snap review into state hospitals after fungus, maggots and pigeons wreaked havoc on patient care, in two instances causing patient fatalities. The review ordered by Health Minister Ryan Park has so far identified 112 "non-routine" issues over the past year, of which 74 have been resolved, 32 are being rectified, and six are being examined more closely.

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What must happen now deadly mould outbreak exposed in Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

7news.com.au, Other, 01/03/2026, Sarina Andaloro

They say daylight is the best disinfectant. But somehow a panel of "experts" decided it best to keep the public in the dark and treat us like mushrooms, when it came to a deadly mould outbreak that killed three transplant patients inside NSW's top hospital, Royal Prince Alfred, in Sydney.

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NSW hospital ceiling collapses on doctor as mould outbreak closes ward

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 02/03/2026, Madeleine Bower

A doctor at a regional NSW hospital had pieces of ceiling fall on his head, while a nearby mental health ward had a quarter of its beds closed for three months due to a mould outbreak. The latest hospital maintenance concerns come as the Minns government launches an urgent review into maintenance of the state's hospitals.

Also reported by: [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [Northern Territory News \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [The Mercury \(Online\)](#).

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Double threat

Hobart Mercury, General News, 02/03/2026, Sue Bailey, Page 1

=As Tasmanian health workers prepare to begin rolling stoppages in the state's public hospitals, the teachers' union will decide this week whether to also walk off the job. Health and Community Services Union secretary Robbie Moore said after the hour-long stop-work meetings out the front of the hospitals the industrial campaign would intensify but would not put lives at risk while doing so.

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Dire shortage of healthcare providers capable of performing potentially life-changing endometriosis scans

9News, Other, 01/03/2026, Maddison Leach

Ultrasound scans will now be the first step for diagnosing endometriosis in Victoria but getting the right one could prove difficult. Standard pelvic ultrasounds can miss signs of the incurable disease which affects one in seven women and girls in Australia.

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Ambos' 'dangerous' long shifts and station closures reveal staffing crisis: Libs

Canberra Times, Other, 01/03/2026, Jasper Lindell

Staffing shortages have forced multiple closures across the ACT's ambulance stations, leaving patients waiting longer for help while paramedics have worked "dangerous" 16-hour shifts to cover the stretched service. Hundreds of pages of documents released under freedom of information laws detail frequent ambulance station closures since the middle of last year, with incident reports revealing ambulance callouts often missed target response times. The documents were released to Deputy Opposition Leader Deborah Morris, the Canberra Liberals' spokeswoman on emergency services, who warned patients had been potentially put at risk. Ms Morris said the dossier showed frontline ambulance staff were beyond exhausted and Labor needed to act to fix the ambulance service.

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Medicare boost a promise fulfilled

Hobart Mercury, General News, 02/03/2026, Julie Collins, Page 17

One year ago this month, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced our government's historic \$8.5bn investment to strengthen Medicare. The Prime Minister made this announcement in Launceston, in our state, because he knows just how important healthcare is to Tasmanians.

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Patient records go digital in \$1b project

Newcastle Herald, General News, 02/03/2026, Damon Cronshaw, Page 3

A \$1 billion online system to store patient medical records is set to begin in the Hunter this month, before being rolled out across the state. The Single Digital Patient Record (SDPR) will store people's medical records in one place, including electronic referrals, test results, appointments and treatment history.

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

Medical Board of Australia to appeal decision allowing Dr Dileepa Jayaweera to continue working at Ballarat clinic

ABC Online, Other, 01/03/2026, Antonia O'Flaherty

The Medical Board of Australia is appealing a tribunal decision that allowed a Ballarat doctor accused of digitally penetrating a female patient to continue working at the same clinic, pending a final decision. Dr Dileepa Jayaweera was initially banned from practising at Carn-Brae Clinic in Winter Valley after a patient made allegations about his conduct when she asked him to remove a skin tag during a consultation a year ago.

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Measles alert across city

Cairns Post, General News, 02/03/2026, Rosalee Chapman, Page 2

Local health authorities have issued a public health warning for several Cairns suburbs after identifying potential exposure sites for a highly infectious disease. Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service issued a public health alert on Saturday, February 28, after confirming a person with measles visited several locations across Cairns while infectious.

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Urgent health alert as authorities admit highly contagious virus is CIRCULATING in Sydney

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 01/03/2026, Sarah Brookes

Health authorities are scrambling to contain a potential measles outbreak in Sydney after a new case with no known exposure links raised fears the virus is circulating undetected. NSW Health on Saturday confirmed a south-west Sydney resident had contracted the highly infectious illness despite having no connection to previously identified cases or exposure sites, prompting concerns of broader community transmission.

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AICIS

Scientists issue warning after making disturbing discovery on popular beaches: 'Thousands and thousands of pieces'

Yahoo! News Australia, Other, 01/03/2026, Calvin Coffee

After Australian wastewater plants were flagged last year for releasing alarming amounts of microplastics into Sydney's environment, unable to filter the tiny plastics out, new research suggests the problem is accelerating, with plastic pollution rising sharply and posing growing risks to human health and local ecosystems.

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